

The California Medical Association has officially notified the armed forces of its desire to cooperate in the procurement of needed medical officers. The Association realizes that throughout the state there are a number of physicians who have a moral, if not a legal, obligation to the armed forces and who have not yet come forward to stand their turn in the line of duty. The county medical societies have been asked to help locate such physicians and to urge them to come front and center. This request is

here reiterated, with the greatest urgency. The alternative: Conscription of doctors up to the age of 45 years, which might entail the drafting of many men who have already earned the right to private practice by having given of themselves patriotically during the 1941-1946 period.

The county medical societies may well wish to ask their available colleagues if it isn't better, here as in sickness cost insurance, to solve this problem in the voluntary, not the compulsory, way.

Medicine and Animals

Again in 1949, even as in 1948, in 1947 and in years before, antivivisection legislation has been appearing before our state legislatures. And again, even as in earlier years, a campaign of babies versus dogs has eventuated.

Doctors are getting a little fed up with this sort of legislative legerdemain, a little tired of having to justify their laboratory work in terms of emotionalism. Particularly are they tired of having to pull out some of the emotional stops instead of sticking close to their scientific sphere. On the other hand, they recognize the processes of democracy at work in such legislative attempts.

Our system of government is based on the right of the people to petition for change. Their petitions may be well or ill founded; they may be accepted or rejected. Regardless of origin, such petitions are granted the right of full hearing, full discussion, full consideration, before any final decision is reached. People who would sponsor legislation for antivivisection, or for any of a variety of subjects which might run the gamut from the facetious to the paranoic, still have the right to make their views and wishes known, provided only that they are able to find a member of a legislative body who is willing to introduce a bill which would carry out their proposals.

In 1949, as in years past, we have seen another rash of antivivisection bills brought forth, in our own state as well as in sister sovereignties. We have also seen the introduction of measures which would place a legitimate restraint on the use of animals in experimentation by providing for the inspection and licensure of premises and institutions where such experimentation would take place. Bills of this character are designed to put a stop to any possible illicit use of animals in unsupervised and unregu-

lated experiments while, at the same time, they provide an official and publicly-regulated supervision of all premises and auspices which would seek to employ animals in their scientific march.

It is a sad commentary on the followers of the antivivisection cult that they are not content to permit legislative passage of such measures. Such bills actually would purely serve the antivivisectionist cause—the prevention of illicit and medically-opposed experimentation not based on science and possibly containing elements of sadism in unorthodox individuals. Nevertheless, some of these cultists carry on to great lengths in voicing their opposition to even this type of legislation.

A recent report from the nation's capital told of the packing of a hearing room in Congress with antivivisectionist followers who openly cried and wailed over a proposal for the release of doomed pound animals to approved research institutions. These so-called animal lovers were horrified by a request that the pound animals, strays which were picked up and held in public custody because their former owners were not enough interested in them to seek their whereabouts, be turned over to laboratories for scientific purposes rather than put to death in the functioning of health laws.

All in all, 1949 looks like another year of stalemate in the realm of animal experimentation. Dog and cat lovers voice their pleas; scientists ask that animals slated for the gas chamber be made available for humanely governed experiment for the advancement of scientific medicine. Neither side seems to be gaining much headway and neither seems discountable for future years and future legislative sessions. It looks as though dogs versus babies will be with us for a long time to come.